

152 frighten Quain, too. One of their favorite stories was that the Nahukwa
186 chief, Aloike, was coming to take Quain. Aloike was a powerful sor-
203 cerer and had a reputation for treachery among all the tribes, and the
648 Nahukwa were probably feared more because of him than because of
any traditional enmity.

Wild tales were also told out of sheer perversity. A party of Kama-
yurá came to visit and announced that Quain's father would arrive in
an airplane with gifts for the Trumai. On another occasion they said
that a plane full of *karakiba* (white men) had landed at the house of
Thomas Young, an American missionary who lived further up the Kuli-
seu.

The Trumai, themselves, aggravated their own fears. One of them
spoke at length in the men's circle on how the Kamayurá tortured their
captives by piercing their arms and legs with arrow points. He also
said that they beheaded them, stirred up their brains over a fire, and
ate them. This was undoubtedly a false story born of fear and con-
trary to all the more reliable information on the treatment of captives.
However, torture and ritual cannibalism of this sort once flourished in
the tropical forest. It is, therefore, interesting that the Trumai should
know of such practices.

648 Due to the constant fear of surprise attack shared by all the tribes,
302 it was considered bad policy to enter foreign territory without giving
warning. This was done by building a fire. A party from the village
then went out to investigate, unless it was definitely known who the in-
truders were. If a fire was seen by a traveling party, their canoes were
beached and an answering fire was built.

648 Surprise meetings were to be avoided at all costs. When Quain was
186 traveling on the Kuliseu with a Trumai group, the sight of a Kamayurá
canoe caused some concern. The chief was quite happy to note that
122 Quain left his rifle in the bottom of the boat, thereby giving a peaceable
appearance.

181 According to Dyott, an English explorer who descended the Xingú
202 in 1938, arrows planted point first in the ground were "no trespassing"
648 signs.¹² He also said that whistling arrows were shot in the air to warn
strangers to stay away. The latter sign was, more accurately, an addi-
201 tional means of letting one's presence be known. Smoke spirals seen
to the north or east always caused a great disturbance in the Trumai
village, as these were thought to be Suyá fires. Since the upper Xingú
people approached from the south, fires seen in this direction caused
little alarm unless there had been rumors of some aggressive act by
the Kamayurá or Nahukwa.

152 Fear of attack at times approached the point of hysteria. The high
tension might last a few days, after which it would decline to the normal

¹² Dyott 1920, pp. 283-84.

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level of general anxiety. It was usually the result of several days of rumor, omens, and strange fires in the north. 152
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Late one night during Quain's stay, after most of the village had retired, a near panic occurred when two women shouted that the Suyá were attacking. All the initiated men, even the weak and old, rushed to the village center with their bows and arrows. The women and children from two of the four Trumai houses hurried with their hammocks to the other two houses. The frightened men milled around in the center of the village with no apparent organization or direction. The chief, who was trembling, did not take command of the situation. [622]

If this had been a real attack, noted Quain, the raiders would have given a loud yell and loosed a volley of arrows. He later made an investigation and found no signs of intruders. One of the women thought that someone had thrown dirt at her. Quain believed this to be a habit of the Suyá, but one that was usually a friendly overture.

The women feared other tribes more than did the men, for one of the main purposes of raids was to capture women. In every upper Xingú community women from other tribes are always found. The dispersal of women takes three forms: capture in warfare (by groups outside the area), open abduction of a woman by intimidation of her fellow-villagers, and peaceful intertribal marriage. According to de Lima, the Suyá raid the Waurá village on the Batovi River for female captives, as the women of the Arawakan tribes are the only potters of the region.¹⁶ The Trumai lost many young women to the Kamayurá by intimidation, the second of the above means. Most of the women in the Trumai village were at one time held by the Kamayurá with the result that, in many Trumai marriages, the woman is several years older than the man. At the time of Quain's visit, Trumai women were still living among the Kamayurá and other groups. One of them, the sister of the Trumai chief, ran away from the Kamayurá and returned home because her husband had beaten her, an action that angered the Trumai greatly. There she picked up the threads of her old life, but after a few weeks a party of Kamayurá took her back to their village. The Trumai offered no resistance, either physical or verbal, although they outnumbered the visitors, for to have done so would have invited retaliation. 648
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The fact that the Trumai had lost many women completely, or regained them only after their most fertile years had passed, was probably a contributing factor to the depopulation of the group. The losses were only partially compensated for by the marriage of outside women into the Trumai village. There were three foreign women in the community in 1938: a Suyá, a Mehinaku, and a Kamayurá. Their status was lower than that of the Trumai women, and they were at times taunted because of their foreign origin. They did not participate as fully in the 648
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¹⁶ De Lima 1960, p. 8.

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Visits might be made to obtain a bride, engage in trade, participate in some intertribal ceremony, or for a combination of any of these reasons. Most visits were ostensibly of a purely social nature, but they were also used to frighten and impress. Stealing was frequent, especially when the host tribe, like the Trumai, was weak. The Trumai rarely protested against thefts while the visitors were still in the village, although they vehemently expressed their indignation later. Such discretion was due more to fear than etiquette. [648] [574] [584] [685] [152]

The inferior position of the Trumai was most evident when visitors were in the village. The Kamayurá, especially, treated the Trumai with arrogance and contempt. At times they would enter the Trumai village without having built the customary warning fire. The Trumai, on the other hand, did everything possible to please their visitors and prove their generosity and good will toward them. Quain was berated by the Trumai chief for being too niggardly toward the Kamayurá, and he found that greater respect was accorded to the Kamayurá chief than to either himself or the Trumai chief. The Kamayurá felt slighted that Quain had not visited them instead of the contemptible Trumai, and, when Quain went to meet the visiting Kamayurá chief, the latter turned away with an air of bored indifference. [202] [123] [554]

The Kamayurá chief was immediately given a stool to sit on and was plied with cigarettes. When he threw one away after a few puffs, he was promptly given another. Deference was also paid to ordinary Kamayurá, although to a lesser degree. Once when such a member came to the Trumai village alone, the man who received him rushed to Quain's house to borrow a chair in order to reach some tobacco which had been placed on a high shelf. He was in a great hurry, for it would not be good to keep his guest waiting. [352]

This behavior stands in sharp contrast to a visit to the Kamayurá village made by Quain and a party of Trumai. The chief delegated their reception to his brother. No special attention was paid to them, although the villagers were active and industrious in an apparent effort to impress. The Trumai were not even asked to sit on the log in the village center.

Due to the extensive intertribal relations, command of a language besides one's own is common in the area generally. But since Trumai is an independent tongue and the number of Trumai small, it is probable that multilingual people were more frequent among them than in other tribes. Their "second" language was usually Kamayurá, but few outsiders spoke Trumai, although more understood it. When Kamayurá came to visit, conversation was ordinarily in their tongue. Of the three foreign women in the Trumai village, only the Suyá woman could speak even a broken Trumai. Since the Suyá had no peaceful relations with the tribes of the headwaters, the Gó language was not widely known there. The other two foreign women merely understood Trumai. [648] [191] [563]